/345 cont./

182 Harmful to the child's health, on the other hand, are the poor huts,
165 which are always /346/ filled with dense smoke, and furthermore
854 the lack of cleanliness and the faulty diet. The belief, widespread
• [362] among all African primitive peoples, that fat gives strength and
[853] health leads to the stuffing of the baby, despite all its struggles and
[146] screams, with unbelievable quantities of butter. Soor, as well as
[856] stomach and intestinal affections, and ailments of the respiratory
[164] organs are therefore also the principal illnesses that carry off the babies. If one compares the high mortality among children with the very low one in later life, and if one further considers that, in inspecting the Masai kraals, one finds almost only healthy people full of energy, one cannot resist the thought that the treatment of the children, especially the babies, unconsciously aims at culling out all the weak elements at an early age and preserving for the people only the most vigorous ones that are equal to the demands of life. Seen from this standpoint, that of natural selection, the high child mortality seems less unfortunate. Finally, the late age
182 at which the men enter their first marriage is unfavorable for popu-
582 lation increase. Until about the 28th or 30th year of life the Masai
836 belongs to the warrior standing, and he may marry only after leaving
839 it. This circumstance in turn makes free love, such as exists in the warrior kraals, an understandable social institution. One must judge this arrangement on the soil in which it grows, in order to remain objective. From the same standpoint we shall have to judge more leniently the free love existing among the married, which, despite numerous restrictions, appears to us like a continuous prostitution
[548] of the woman. One can do this all the more since through that professional prostitution is excluded here, and consequently the possibility of infection is greatly reduced; this last circumstance is undoubtedly to be regarded as people-preserving. Actually the Masai
[164] maintain that in former times (before the great livestock epidemics) venereal diseases only very rarely occurred. Immorality is rightly
182 regarded as a people-destroying factor, and history teaches us by
831 many examples how licentious and refined sensuality was one of the grounds that caused the decline of higher peoples. Here among the Masai, however, it is not a matter of this unnatural kind of

342 factor has changed the Masai pattern of boma construction.
343 The present bomas, for the most part, are semi-permanent
233 and during the rainy season the herds are sent out to graze in the care of a few youths supervised by one or more elders. They construct temporary brush bomas, just large enough in diameter to contain the stock in their care. Usually no plastered hut is constructed. Instead a small, often open-roofed brush enclosure is made in one corner. Where a temporary boma is to be occupied for several weeks a somewhat larger boma is made and the hut may be plastered. Building these temporary bomas results in some brush clearance, but rarely in any tree damage.

362 Large bomas appeared to be relatively
[361] permanent. When a large boma was abandoned another was usually built nearby, often only a few yards away. Individual bomas appeared to be occupied normally for about five to eight years, although some doubtless last longer. One cause for moving is the accumulation
[233] of dung. In the center of large bomas where the livestock are driven during the night the dung accumulates into a gentle hill sometimes several feet high at the center.
[364] This creates sanitary problems in the rainy periods since the huts are at the foot of this hill and the doors usually face inward. When it is dry if a fire gets

362 started in and under the dung it is similar to a peat fire and virtually impossible to put out.

708 Masai also sometimes abandon a boma, or at least the house involved, if a person dies in it.

75(People who are very seriously ill are removed from the boma at least during the day, often to a small thorn boma with a shelter constructed nearby. They may remain there at night also. It was difficult to learn much definite about this practice. A disabled person spending the night outside a boma is very likely to end up [177] inside a hyaena. The administration frowns on this [178] efficient method of disposal and consequently the Masai have become reticent to talk about it. The sick persons' bomas that we saw looked to have been occupied nights as well as days.

262 Food: Traditionally the Masai are supposed to survive entirely on blood and milk (Gunther, 1955). In Western Masailand the Masai diet consists of posho (maize meal), milk, meat, and occasionally blood. The 234 462 cows and sometimes goats are milked by the women and little 234 girls. The milk is collected in large calabashes. These 415 [53] calabashes, ochre colored and sometimes ornately [38] decorated with beads, are almost as much a symbol of the [291] Masai as the ochre blankets or cloaks, moran spears and hair styles.